Rock Wall
(Pacific Power Company Rock Wall)
North Side of Battle Creek Canyon
Shingletown vicinity
Shasta County
California

HAER No. CA-135

HAER CAL 45-SHINGTN 1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record
National Park Service
Western Region
U. S. Department of the Interior
San Francisco, California 94107

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

Rock Wall (Pacific Power Company Rock Wall)

HAER No. CA-135

Location:

Beginning 1.7 miles northwest of the intersection of Darrah Springs State Fish Hatchery Road and Battle Creek Ranch Road, the standing wall and remnant trench extends approximately 2,250 feet in a westerly direction along the north side of Battle Creek at approximately 910 feet (280 m) above mean sea level. The wall is located at Township 30 North, Range 1 West, SW 1/4 SW 1/4 NE 1/4 Section 30, Mt. Diablo Meridian, in the Shingletown vicinity, Shasta County, California. Red Bluff, California, is approximately 22 miles southwest of the structure.

UTM: from 10.583190.4475260 to 10.583880.4475380

Ouad: Tuscan Buttes NE

Date of Construction: January-June 1907

Engineer/Builder:

R. P. Waller, Construction Chief J. H. Strutt, Chief Engineer

Leon Bly, Engineer

Present Owners:

Bruce and Bob McCampbell, et al

P.O. Box 240

Los Gatos, California

Present Use:

None

Significance:

The Pacific Power Company Rock Wall is representative of early hydroelectric development efforts along the Battle Creek drainage system of Shasta County, California. The massive native basalt cobble wall is an impressive engineering achievement, constructed with traditional masonry techniques common to the era. The structure combines strength and durability of form, with an aesthetically

finished presentation.

Report prepared by:

Lynda Sekora, Historical Researcher

INFOTEC Research, Inc.

5088 North Fruit Avenue, Suite 101

Fresno, California 93711

Date:

February 1993

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Project Information:

Documentation of the Pacific Power Company Rock Wall (CA-SHA-1834H) was accomplished on October 29, 1992, as part of the Pipeline Expansion Project (PEP), in accordance with recommended treatment plans.¹ Procedures for compliance with 36 CFR 800, Section 106, of the National Historic Preservation Act (17 USC 470f, as amended) are further defined in the *Programmatic Agreement (PA)*.²

¹ Romano et al., Archeological Testing and Evaluation Report, 1992 Field Season, and Historic Properties Treatment Plan for 1992 Field Season, PGT-PG&E Pipeline Expansion Project, Idaho, Washington, Oregon and California, Volume II.D: Descriptive Reports and Data Compendia, California, 2.7-1-2.7-8.

² Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, Programmatic Agreement among the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission; the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation; the Idaho State Historic Preservation Officer; the Washington State Historic Preservation Officer; the Bureau of Land Management -California State Office (for administered properties in Idaho, Oregon, and California); the United States Forest Service, Region 6 (for administered properties in Idaho, Oregon, and California); the Pacific Gas Transmission Company, and the Pacific Gas and Electric Company, 1-10.

NARRATIVE

The Pacific Power Company Rock Wall is located in the Sierra Nevada foothills on a high terrace above the sheer-walled Battle Creek canyon. The steep terrain of the rolling hills moderates at this juncture with the elevated terrace at approximately 910 ft (280 m) amsl before dropping to Battle Creek at 740 ft (225 m) amsl (see map on Page 4). The surrounding rugged topography features numerous springs and incised intermittent streams that drain into Battle Creek. Basalt outcrops protrude through the shallow soils, and basaltic rocks of all sizes litter the slopes. The biotic community is an oak savanna, with blue oak (Quercus douglasii), bull pine (Pinus sabiniana), juniper (Juniperus californica), and canyon live oak (Quercus chrysolepis) being the principal flora. Seasonally marshy areas near springs along the northern margin of the terrace support willow (Salix spp.) and other riparian growth.

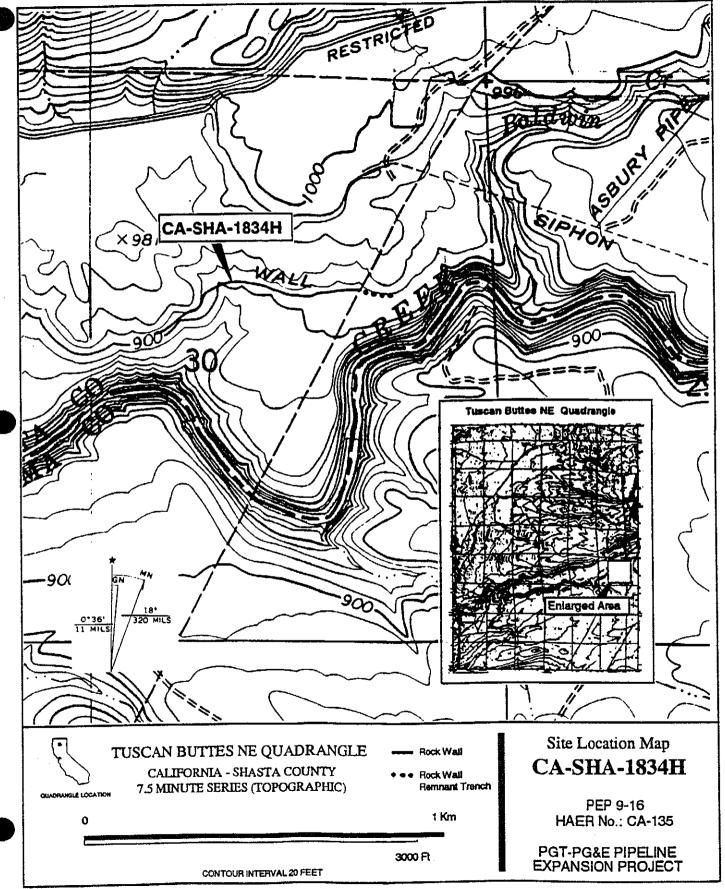
The wall winds across the terrace in a westerly direction at the 910 ft contour (see photograph nos. CA-135-1 and CA-135-2). The structure is in three distinct sections, each in varying stages of construction. The total length of the built sections of the rock wall measures approximately 1,850 ft, and the average height of completed segments ranges from 8 to 10 ft (see photograph no. CA-135-3). A 10 1/2-ft-wide base rises and narrows to a 3 1/2- to 6 1/2-ft-wide crest. The top is recessed in a slight trough. The wall, with the exception of two breaches, remains as it was when the builders ceased construction.

The wall construction method utilizes naturally occurring cobbles set in a shallow trench. The unsquared but scrabbled basalt stone is dry-laid in random rubble courses (see photograph no. CA-135-4). The exterior stonework uses boulders of various sizes, with smaller fragments snecked into the jointing to complete the coursing (see photograph no. CA-135-5). The protruding edges of the larger facing stones were removed with a stone ax or hammer to provide a smoother, more finished exterior surface (see photograph no. CA-135-6). Backing for the exterior facings consists of smaller basalt rubble, and rammed earth fills the core (see photograph no. CA-135-7).

The east end of the wall begins as a shallow trench near the cliff's edge overlooking Battle Creek's Horseshoe Bend. This 400-ft section includes remnant portions of the trench, which is partially filled with the beginnings of a short wall segment with two courses of facing rock, lined on the inside with rubble backing; the core would eventually have been filled with earth (see photograph no. CA-135-8). This wall segment extends west about 30 ft before ending at a wide breach caused by construction of the PG&E pipeline in 1960.

West of the pipeline breach is the principal segment of the wall (about 1,250 ft) that traverses the terrace and curves to the northwest, where it gradually diminishes into an

³Phillips and Byrne, Masonry Construction, 65, 76, 78, 81-82.



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unstructured rubble course across an incised seasonal stream (see photograph no. CA-135-9). The primary wall section features two buttresses positioned perpendicular to the north elevation (see photograph no. CA-135-10). The buttresses give support to the deep curve and are structurally identical to the wall. A small breach in the middle of this long segment appears to be a structural failure, probably caused by the underlying marshy ground conditions (see photograph no. CA-135-11).

On the west side of the seasonal stream, the wall extends approximately 600 ft southwest across much steeper terrain, until it dwindles to an unfinished end at a basalt outcrop. Only a small portion of this segment is complete (see photograph no. CA-135-12).

Along the entire route of the wall are piles of the naturally occurring basalt rocks, sorted by size, that were apparently assembled as the building material. Berms from the trenching are visible along the south elevation of the longest wall section and bordering the unfinished trenches of the easternmost portion.

Battle Creek is the border between Shasta and Tehama counties. Tehama County to the south is within the northern Sacramento Valley, but portions of the Sierra Nevada in the east and the Coast Range in the west also lie within its borders. Shasta County, directly north of Tehama County, is a mountainous area situated at the northern terminus of the Sacramento Valley and includes portions of the Trinity, Cascade, and Sierra Nevada mountains. Major drainages in the region include the Sacramento River, which flows through both counties, and the Pit and McCloud Rivers of Shasta County.

During the late nineteenth century, northern California was relatively sparsely populated despite the emigration of Euroamericans from the eastern states during the 1850s. In 1890 the Tehama County Seat, Red Bluff, had a population of only 2,500; and Redding, the seat of Shasta County, had less than 2,000 residents. Tehama County's economy was primarily based on agriculture and timber, while Shasta County's economic base was more diversified because of its substantial mineral resources. Gold and silver were the focus of mining companies by 1862, but steadily rising prices caused copper to be mined on a larger scale at the turn of the century. By 1901 Shasta's copper mines had become world leaders in production, and the expansion of copper mining led to the growth of associated industries as well as an increase in population.⁴

The expansion of copper mining and its affiliated industries, together with the growth of urban centers, depleted the area's timber resources. The mining industry had a significant impact on California's hydroelectric development in general. Mining required large volumes of water, and most mines were not located near streams with year-round flows. Extensive

⁴Reynolds and Scott, The Battle Creek Hydroelectric System, 7-11.

⁵Jensen, "Liquid Gold," 8.

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water gathering and storage systems were built to supply the mines with water, and these ditch and reservoir networks were later converted to hydroelectric use.⁶

The geography of California also influenced the nature of early hydroelectric development, which used an extensive system of canals and ditches to bring water into power plants that utilized high heads with low water volumes for electrical generation. The rugged mountainous terrain of the Sierra Nevada, with steep stream gradients, was ideal for power production.⁷

Battle Creek, though a small tributary of the Sacramento River, was suitable for medium-scale hydroelectric development. It had a steep gradient for high-head power generation and a relatively steady year-round water flow because of heavy snow pack and a myriad of aquifer springs. For this reason, construction of large artificial reservoirs was not needed, which in turn reduced the capital investment necessary for tapping the stream's power potential. The Battle Creek drainage was also ideally located for long distance power transmission in Shasta and Tehama counties. The stream system lies midway between Redding and Red Bluff, the principal urban areas, and lines strung from its watershed could easily serve the agricultural districts in the Sacramento Valley as well as the mines of Shasta County. Although small power and light companies began developing the area's urban electrical facilities in 1889, long distance transmission was not made possible until after 1900. At that time the Keswick Electric Power Company consolidated most of the smaller utilities and began constructing the Battle Creek hydroelectric system.

Early mining practices and the general scarcity of water in California led to a legal system for water management that proved favorable to the hydroelectric industry. The doctrine of appropriation grew out of the mid-nineteenth century period when most California lands were publicly owned, especially in the mining districts; few individuals owned lands fronting streams. As most claims were located some distance from the waterways, miners commonly appropriated water from a local stream by diverting it to their claims through ditches and canals. All a miner had to do was post a notice of his intentions on the place of diversion, indicating the amount of water he would use.¹⁰

⁶ Reynolds and Scott, Battle Creek System, 12, 22.

⁷Ibid, 7-11.

⁸Ibid, 23-24.

⁹Electric Bond and Share Company, Report of Northern California Power Company, Battle Creek Power Company, 7-9; Jensen, "Liquid Gold," 7, 13; Reynolds and Scott, Battle Creek System, 23-24.

¹⁰Reynolds and Scott, Battle Creek System, 14-15.

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The water appropriations were usually recorded in county files, and if the water was actually used, the claimants were given perpetual rights to a specified volume of water from an identified stream or spring. The doctrine of appropriation was incorporated into California law and allowed developers of hydroelectric power to generate significant amounts of energy, despite the relatively small size of available streams. Utilities with water rights could divert and even diminish the volume of water from streams without lawsuits from stream-front property owners. A power company could collect and combine the flow of several small streams until sufficient volume was gained and lead the water to any point selected for power production.¹¹

The Pacific Power Company Rock Wall relates to the early development of hydroelectric power in the Battle Creek region, begun in 1900 by the Mt. Lassen Electric Company and the Keswick Electric Power Company of San Francisco businessman H. H. Noble. Mt. Lassen's plans to erect a hydroelectric plant in the Battle Creek locale never materialized, but the Keswick Company succeeded in constructing the first hydroelectric facility at Volta on a tributary of the North Fork of Battle Creek (see map on page 8). Volta functioned primarily to supply power for the area's mining industry. In 1902 Keswick Power incorporated as the Northern California Power Company, and under the continued direction of Noble, went on to expand its hydroelectric system along the Battle Creek drainage. The Battle Creek hydroelectric system has been recorded for the Historic American Engineering Record. 13

One hydroelectric competitor for control of Battle Creek water was the Mt. Lassen Water and Power Company, which incorporated in 1904. The company's plans to convey water from North Battle, Baldwin, and Darrah creeks to a powerhouse on Horseshoe Bend of Battle Creek never came to fruition because of a lack of capital.¹⁴

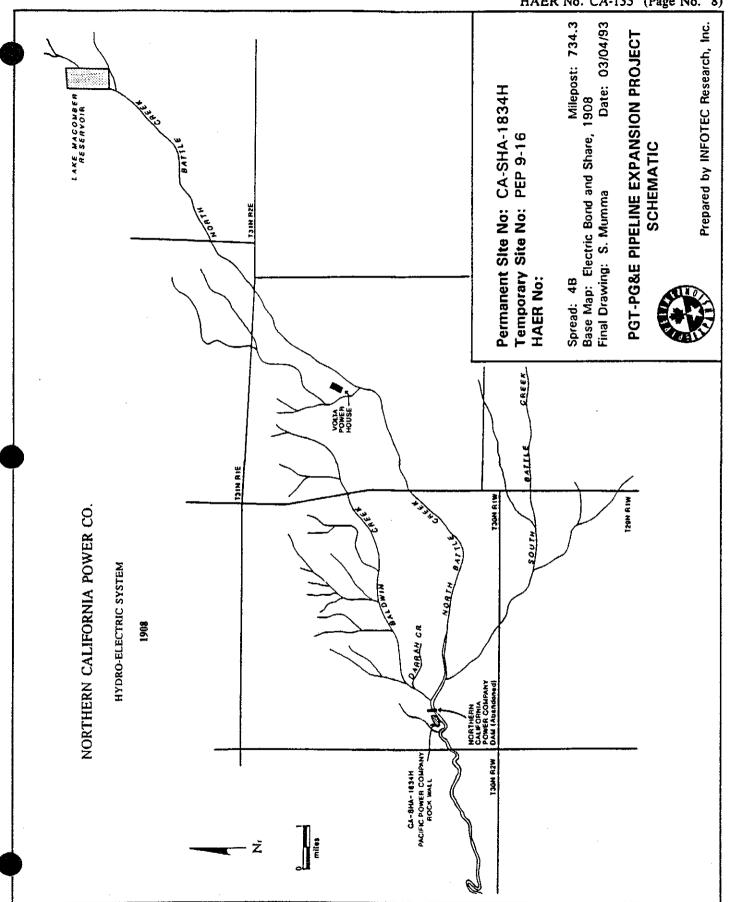
In 1906 John A. Whitehead purchased the assets of the Mt. Lassen Water and Power Company and began buying options to water rights of landowners along the Battle Creek drainage in Shasta County. Whitehead, a British engineer, was financed in this endeavor by two other Englishmen, John B. Madgabon and Goodricke T. Peacocke. At the time, Whitehead resided in Redding, although he was frequently out of the area. The consortium incorporated the Pacific Power Company on December 8, 1906, with Whitehead as

¹³Ibid, 14-15.

¹²Ibid, 23, 28-30, 43.

¹³¹bid.

^{14&}quot; More Electric Power," Red Bluff Daily News (RBDN), 4 June 1904; Reynolds and Scott, Battle Creek System, 58, 60.



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president. The company's offices were based in Redding and then Red Bluff. 15

The rock wall was constructed by the Pacific Power Company from January through June of 1907.¹⁶ The structure was probably built as the basal support for a proposed flume, pipe, or aqueduct that would carry diverted Battle Creek water from Section 27 of Township 30 North, Range 1 West in Shasta County to Section 33 of Township 30 North, Range 2 West in Tehama County.¹⁷ The intent of the water conveyance was "for generating electric power for public use and also for irrigation."¹⁸

After incorporating, Pacific Power Company went forward with plans to build a hydroelectric plant near Horseshoe Bend. The powerhouse, with an output of 12,000 hp (8,000 kw), was to be supplied with water carried by canal, ditch, flume, pipe, or aqueduct from the Battle Creek drainages, Baldwin Creek, and Darrah Creek. The rock wall was part of the conveyance system that would deliver water to the plant. Whitehead proposed to use Pacific Power's facilities for irrigation and electrical lighting for public use to avoid direct competition with the rival Northern California Power, which focused on powering the mining industry.¹⁹

Construction of Pacific Power's Battle Creek hydroelectric facilities commenced on 6 January 1907. R. P. Waller served as chief of construction, and J. H. Strutt was the chief engineer, assisted by engineer Leon Bly. The name of the mason(s) is unknown. A crew of 35 men began the preliminary work, which included erecting three work camps.²⁰ Whitehead boasted that his employees were Americans and "far superior to the class of

¹⁵Pacific Power Company Articles of Incorporation, 1906; Reynolds and Scott, *Battle Creek System*, 58; "Breezy Items from Manton," *RBDN*, 23 August 1906a; "Pacific Power Company Charter," *RBDN*, 26 December 1906b; "Power Plant for Battle Creek," *RBDN*, 28 December 1906c; "Vast Irrigation Projects by Means of Pumping Stations," *RBDN*, 6 January 1907a; "President of Pacific Power Co. Outlines Plans," *RBDN*, 8 January 1907b.

¹⁶Emory Blodgett, telephone interviews with author, Shingletown, California, 10 July 1991, 3 February 1993; "Vast Irrigation Projects by Means of Pumping Stations," *RBDN*, 6 January 1907a; "P.P.C. Work Suspended," *RBDN*, 11 June 1907c.

¹⁷"Vast Irrigation Projects by Means of Pumping Stations," RBDN, 6 January 1907a; Shasta County Water Rights Records, 1906a, 7.

¹⁸Shasta County Water Rights Records, 1906a, 7.

¹⁹Emory Bodgett, telephone interview with author, Shingletown, California, 10 July 1991; "Pacific Power Company Charter," RBDN, 26 December 1906b; "Vast Irrigation Projects by Means of Pumping Stations," RBDN, 6 January 1907a; "Pacific Power Controls Water," RBDN, 30 January 1907d; Reynolds and Scott, Battle Creek System, 58; Shasta County Water Rights Records, 1906a, 647, 651; 1906b, 1, 2, 5, 7.

²⁰⁴Vast Irrigation Projects by Means of Pumping Stations," *RBDN*, 6 January, 1907a; "Rival Power Plants Will Cross Wires," *RBDN*, 19 January, 1907e; "Rival Power Plants Active," *RBDN*, 27 January, 1907f; "All Water Right for Power Site," *RBDN*, 12 February, 1907g; "Era of Cheaper Power," *RBDN*, 28 February, 1907h; "Outcome of Lawsuit Will Be Interesting," *RBDN*, 1 March, 1908a; Reynolds and Scott, *Battle Creek System*, 60.

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imported labor that usually drops in on new operations."²¹ Contrary to Whitehead's claim, however, local informant Bruce McCampbell reported that the wall was constructed using Greek labor.²²

Engineer Strutt planned to build the Pacific Power plant in two stages. Within the first eight months he wanted to erect an auxiliary power plant that had a fall of 125 ft and the generating capacity of about 500 hp (375 kw). A larger plant was to be added later with a fall of 500 ft and 12,000 hp (8,000 kw). By April 1907 the crew had the excavation and foundation of the smaller plant completed. Generating equipment was being shipped by rail from Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, and pipe for the line to a penstock was enroute from Sacramento.²³

About 840 ft of ditch was dug below the present-day Battle Creek-Plateau bridge. Whitehead had planned for the canal to be 7 mi long, 25 ft wide at the top, and 8 ft deep. Although not confirmed by surviving records, construction of the rock wall across the plateau in Section 30 undoubtedly was in progress during this time.²⁴

Neither the powerhouse, ditch, nor wall was ever finished. In June of 1907 work on the Pacific Power hydroelectric facilities was suspended and all of the laborers were discharged. The corporation was troubled by a lack of capital and allegations of fraud. Whitehead, accused of mismanagement, resigned as president and turned over most of his stock to the corporation. Stockholders attempted to raise \$65,000 needed for completion of the project and failed. The company was further hampered by its rivalry with Northern California Power, which also claimed water rights to the Battle Creek drainage.²⁵

Under California's Code of Civil Procedure, Section 1416, parties filing on water rights had 60 days to erect facilities for utilizing the water, and work associated with those preparations

²¹"Special Train for Pacific Power People," RBDN, 28 April 1907i.

²²Bruce McCampbell, on-site interview with Lou Ann Speulda, 29 June 1991.

²³"Pacific Power Company Charter," *RBDN*, 26 December 1906b; "Pacific Power Controls Water," *RBDN*, 30 January 1907d; "Cheap Electric Power Doubles Land Values," *RBDN*, 28 February 1907j; Reynolds and Scott, *Battle Creek System*, 60.

²⁴Emory Blodgett, telephone interview with author, Shingletown, California, 3 February 1993; Jensen, "Liquid Gold," 13; Pacific Gas and Electric Records Center, Inventory and Appraisal, Volume 2:888, 1919; "Vast Irrigation Projects by Means of Pumping Stations," *RBDN*, 6 January 1907a; "Rival Power Plants Active," *RBDN*, 27 January 1907f; "Special Train for Pacific Power People," *RBDN*, 28 April 1907i; Shasta County Water Rights Records, 1906a, 7.

²⁵"P.P.C. Work Suspended," *RBDN*, 11 June 1907c; "Power War Truce," *RBDN*, 4 July 1907k; "Whitehead Will Not Interfere," *RBDN*, 5 November 1907l; "Much Interest in New Power Co.," *RBDN*, 23 February 1907m; "Attorney A. M. McCoy on Pacific Power Plans," *RBDN*, 26 February 1907n; Reynolds and Scott, *Battle Creek System*, 61; Sayles, "William W. Asbury," 21-22.

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was to be pursued "with reasonable diligence until completion." In cases of conflicting claims to the same water rights, the courts adhered to the maxim that "the use of the water alone fixes the right" and validates the claim. Prior to 1907, none of the competing hydroelectric companies had carried out this charge on lower Battle Creek. 27

The Mt. Lassen Company had employed only one man to begin breaking trail and piling stones, attempting to fulfill the legal obligation for claiming the water rights. When Mt. Lassen's man left for a longer time period than allowed by law, Northern California jumped the lower Battle Creek claim. A representative of the company, George Bush, filed on the water in October 1905, and R. E. Johnson was hired to make the necessary survey. One other man, Louis Taylor, was set to work, preparing the way for water usage. Northern California briefly sent Taylor off the claim to another job, and Pacific Power moved in, declaring that its rival had not "pursued its task with reasonable diligence." The tenuous claims of both companies were decided by the courts, which recognized the water rights of the company that actually began to use the water for power generation.

Northern California Power wanted complete control of the waterway's generating capacity. In 1906, when Pacific Power declared its intention to erect a hydroelectric facility on lower Battle Creek, Northern California Power announced it would build a larger plant downstream from the Pacific Power's proposed powerhouse site. Northern California had purchased the land from the railroad and filed for water rights in 1905. The plan included the construction of a massive, cemented, rock dam across the Horseshoe Bend of Battle Creek, which would have flooded the site of Pacific Power's powerhouse.³¹

Before the end of January 1907, Northern California Power had a crew of men preparing the dam site and building work camps. Ditch diggers of the rival companies brawled frequently, as both sides rushed their construction projects. Work on the Northern California dam soon began and continued round-the-clock through June, when construction was suspended and the

²⁶"P.P.C. Work Suspended," RBDN, 11 June 1907c.

²⁷"President of Pacific Power Co. Outlines Plans," RBDN, 8 January 1907b; "Attorney A. M. McCoy on Pacific Power Plans," RBDN, 26 February 1907n; Reynolds and Scott, Battle Creek System, 60.

^{28&}quot;President of Pacific Power Co. Outlines Plans," RBDN, 8 January 1907b; Reynolds and Scott, Battle Creek System, 60.

²⁹"President of Pacific Power Co. Outlines Plans," RBDN, 8 January 1907b.

³⁰ Reynolds and Scott, Battle Creek System, 60.

³¹ Will Dam Battle Creek for Power Plant," RBDN, 5 January 1907o; "Rival Power Plants Active," RBDN, 27 January 1907f; Reynolds and Scott, Battle Creek System, 59.

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project abandoned. By then Pacific Power was no longer a threat, and the Horseshoe Bend dam proved to be too expensive to finance.³²

The two power companies continued to fight each other in and out of court, both confident of the validity of their claims to Battle Creek waters. In March 1908 the court ruled that Northern California possessed the stronger claim and had the right to condemn the land and water rights held by Pacific Power. Northern California and its subsidiary, the Battle Creek Power Company, then took over Pacific Power's hydroelectric interests, but further development of the Battle Creek drainage was shifted to areas other than the Horseshoe Bend vicinity.³³

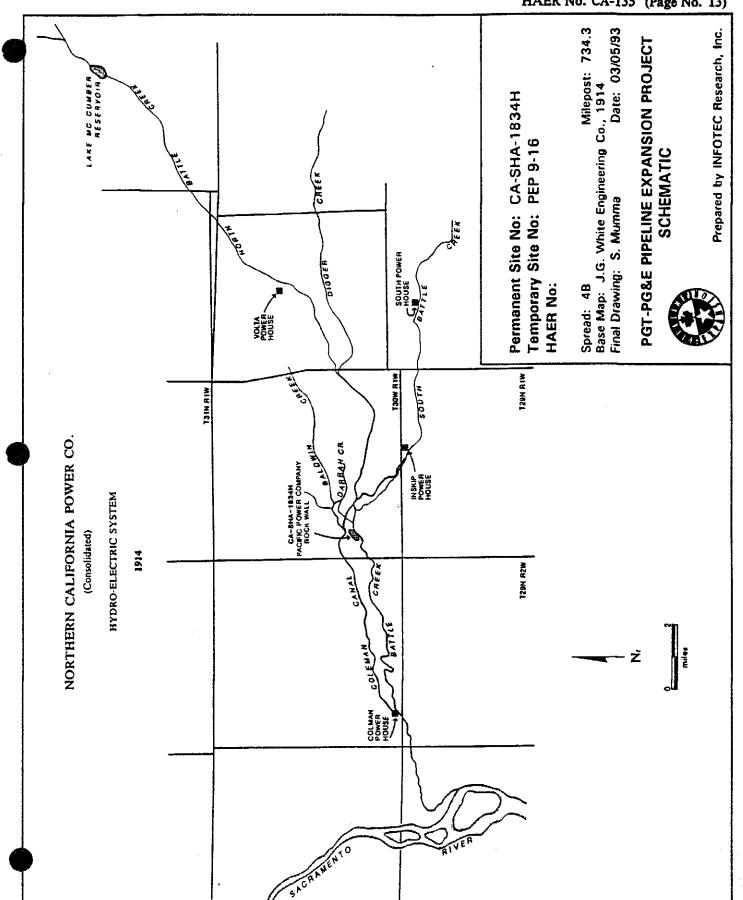
In 1908 the Battle Creek Power Company and Northern California Power merged to form the Northern California Power Company, Consolidated and by 1914 had developed an extensive system (see map on page 13).³⁴ The landowner, William W. Asbury, sold the land to the company in 1909; Asbury retained a life estate until his death in 1927.³⁵ The high terrace above the north side of Battle Creek was subsequently utilized by the Northern California Power Company to link the upper Battle Creek facilities with the Coleman Power House through siphons, pipes, and a canal. The Coleman Canal was built in 1910 and parallels the rock wall, at 980 ft (299 m) amsl. The Pacific Power Company Rock Wall was never finished, although it played an important role during the 1907 water rights struggle in northern California.

³²"President of Pacific Power Co. Outlines Plans," RBDN, 8 January 1907b; "Rival Power Plants Will Cross Wires," RBDN, 19 January 1907e; "Pacific Power Co. Satisfied at Outlook," RBDN, 25 January 1908b; "Power Company Wins One and Loses Seventeen," RBDN, 4 March 1908c; Reynolds and Scott, Battle Creek System, 59-61.

³³ President of Pacific Power Co. Outlines Plans," *RBDN*, 8 January 1907b; "Rival Power Plants Will Cross Wires," *RBDN*, 19 January 1907e; "Cheap Electric Power Doubles Land Values," *RBDN*, 28 February 1907j; "Outcome of Lawsuit Will Be Interesting," *RBDN*, 1 March 1908a; Reynolds and Scott, *Battle Creek System*, 59-61; Sayles, "William W. Asbury," 22-24.

³⁴Coleman, P.G. and E. of California, The Centennial Story of Pacific Gas and Electric Company 1852-1952, 354.

³⁵Sayles, "William W. Asbury," 16, 23-24; Shasta County Deed Records 1884, 581; 1908a, 314; 1908b, 393; 1909a, 651; 1909b, 649; 1927, 358-359.



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Shasta County Water Rights Records, Index to Shasta County Water Rights

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1906b Volume 2. County Clerk's Office, Shasta County Courthouse, Redding, California.

White, J. G.

Northern California Power Company, Consolidated Valuation of Physical Properties. J. G. White Engineering Company, New York. Map on file, Box 9701, Pacific Gas and Electric Company Records Center, San Francisco.

PERSONAL COMMUNICATION

Blodgett, Emory

1991 Personal Communication, Shingletown vicinity, California, 10 July 1991.

1993 Personal Communication, Shingletown vicinity, California, 3 February 1993.

McCampbell, Bruce

1991 Personal Communication, on site, 29 June 1991.